



DEPARTMENT OF PROFESSIONAL AND OCCUPATIONAL REGULATION
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STORM DAMAGE WARNING

For Immediate Release:
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Hurricane Isabel Aftermath May Raise Risk of Fraud *State Warns Public: Beware of Unlicensed Contractors*

RICHMOND – The immediate need for repairs following a hurricane or heavy storm damage can cloud a victim's judgment – and make them prey to unscrupulous contractors and repairmen who may exploit the situation. In anticipation of potential damage from Hurricane Isabel, the Department of Professional and Occupational Regulation (DPOR) cautions consumers to be wary of unlicensed contractors and home repair scam artists.

Virginia law requires a state license – not just a local business license – for most contracting work or bids over \$1,000. Violators are subject to arrest and conviction for unlicensed contracting. By hiring licensed contractors, consumers make themselves eligible for monetary relief from the Contractors Transaction Recovery Fund in case of dishonest conduct.

DOs:

Deal only with licensed contractors.
Verify licensure with the Contractors Board by visiting <http://www.dpor.state.va.us> or calling (804) 367-8511.
Get a written contract with a firm price and start and finish dates.
Contact local Building Official for permit requirements.
Limit your down payment to one-third of the total cost.
Pay by check.

DON'Ts:

Make rushed decisions.
Sign anything until you understand all the terms.
Pay 100% of the bill until the work is 100% complete.
Pay in cash.

BEWARE OF:

High-pressure tactics
Over-friendly sales pitches
“Material left-over”
Escalating prices
Price gouging
Deals that sound too good to be true

Consumers who have been victimized by a contractor scam should immediately call local police and contact the **DPOR Enforcement Division at (804) 367-8504.**

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